The Progressive Review

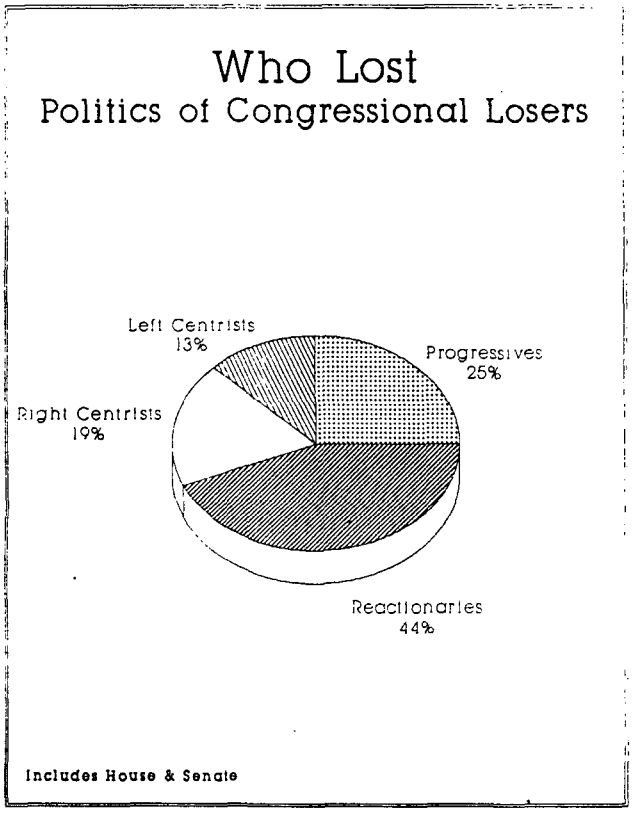
Nbr 293 December 1990

The Voters: Mad with No Place to Go

In his victory statement Jesse Helms indicated that there would be no joy in liberal Mudville thanks to his narrow race-propelled victory over Harvey Gantt, but while Helms himself won, his style of politics took a severe beating elsewhere around the country. In fact, the best news out this year's elections may well be that the tortuous Reagan era, that period of loud-mouth, know-nothing, hypocritically self-righteous, bigoted and bullying politics, may finally be winding down. A few remnants of the times squeaked through -- Helms in North Carolina and Gingrich in Georgia, but by margins so thin as to discourage emulation. Elsewhere, cardboard cowboys like John Silber and Clayton Williams were rejected and the voters showed themselves far more anti-assessment than anti-abortion. The Republican's oft-vaunted Sunbelt strategy is in tatters, Bush is political damaged goods, and the statehouses remain strongly Democratic.

On the other hand, while the right took a fall, the Democrats have little to brag about. When their political moment came, they were not prepared to offer any serious policy alternatives to the voter. Conned into years of pseudo-Republicanism, only rarely were Democratic politicians able to take advantage of the opportunity Bush's stumbles had presented. Further, with the exception of Al Gore, none of the frequently mentioned Democratic contenders who were running showed any noticeable strength. Bill Bradley was almost beaten by an opponent with a campaign treasury less than a tenth of his. Cuomo won an unimpressive victory against the bizarre and underfunded Pierre Rinfret and a majority of voters in the NY exit polls suggested he not run for president. Gephardt's margin was below past performance.

The results will undoubtedly boost the media attention given such emirs of the Democratic Abandonship Council as Sam Nunn and Doug Wilder, the former having faced no opposition and the latter not having to run this year. But there is no particular evidence that the voters are seeking laisse faire of any stripe. If there is a generic message in this year's elections it is that voters are sick and tired of political persiflage, demagogues, slippers and sliders and would like their representatives to start getting down to business. They have rightfully divined -- thanks in no small part to the S&L crisis, the budget mess and the recession -- that too many are, in matters of governance, simply incompetent. While it is true that, as usual, few incumbents were defeated it is also true that a larger number than usual got the scare of their political lives. Average winning margins were down and there were twice as many close races compared to two years ago. After ten years of Reagan and Bush, the voters were mad as hell. But thanks to the failure of the Democratic Party, which lacks a single leader presenting a comprehensive and comprehensible alternative, they were left with no place to go.



Progressive wins

Ex-Burlington mayor **Bernie Sanders**, running as an independent, beat his Republican and Democratic

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The Progressive Review
Bucking the System Since 1966

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opponents to become the first socialist in Congress since 1929 and only the fifth in the House ever.

Sanders defeated incumbent Republican Peter Smith, the guy who was running so scared he even criticized George Bush to his face at a campaign appearance. Smith also, according to the *Boston Globe*, "hurt himself badly when he seemed to show independence from his own record on two key issues: gun control and the federal budget." Smith got the National Rifle Association so mad over his vote for a gun control law, after promising to oppose such measures, that it supported Sanders even though he has been a consistent gun control advocate.

Sanders says he feels comfortable with progressives like Dellums, Conyers, DeFazio and Frank, and expects to be part of the Democratic caucus. But he also promises to come to Washington "raising the issues that the vast majority of members of Congress choose not to touch, such as national health insurance."

Paul Wellstone, the Minnesota college professor who campaigned with hip ads and a back-firing converted school bus, narrowly defeated 12-year GOP senator Rudy Boschwitz. Wellstone, who only stayed in a hotel room once during the election (his supporters took him in) and who raised only an eighth as much as his opponent, says he's coming to Washington "to shake things up. I'm not going to be one of the inner club."

Wellstone, who teaches at Carleton College, chaired the state's Jackson campaign in 1988, has written two books on political organizing, and was once described by his campaign secretary as an "Abbie Hoffman-like character." His low-cost off-beat TV ads included one dubbed "Looking for Rudy" which featured Wellstone madly trying to get Boschwitz to debate him.

Noted civil rights advocate **Eleanor Holmes Norton** -- stunned by revelations that she and her husband hadn't filed their DC tax returns for eight years -- still won the DC delegate race by over 60% citywide. The city's one almost all white ward voted against her by nearly two to one. While most black voters believed Norton when she said the tax story came as a surprise to her, since she thought her husband had filed their taxes, the *Washington Post*, with journalistic excess that would have embarrassed even Rupert Murdoch, ran two dozen stories and more than a half dozen editorials lambasting Norton while revealing little about her black Reaganite opponent until the closing days of the campaign. Thus it obscured a record that included opposition to South African sanctions, heavy participation in the Reagan administration's assault on educational civil rights and the stonewalling of congressional investigators. Insiders credit owner Kathryn Graham and editorial honcho Meg Greenfield for the shoddy vendetta that matched negative campaigning anywhere in the country. There's no absence of malice at the *Post* these days.

One interesting aspect of the DC election results was the effect of what might be called The Six Figure Factor. According to exit polls, Norton support dropped from over 60% among those earning under $100,000 a year to 35% among those earning over that figure. Similarly, Republican mayoral candidate Maurice Turner doubled his support once voters earned over $100,000, and council candidate Marion Barry's support dropped by more than a third when voters hit six figures.

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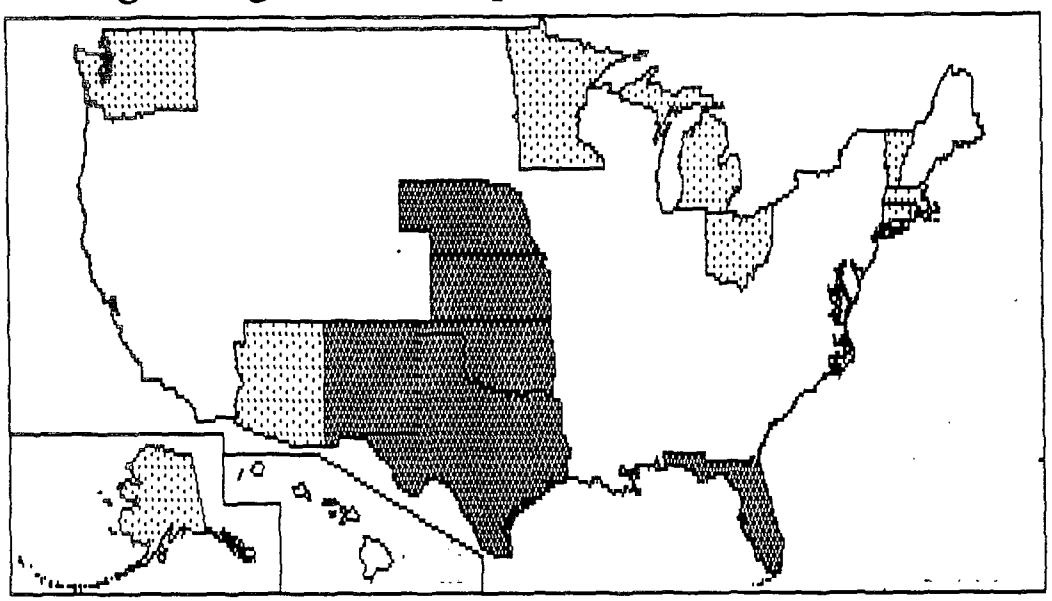
Changes in governorships



Dark = To Democrats Light = To Republicans

Jesse Jackson was elected as a shadow senator from DC. Under the shadow senator plan, first used by Tennessee before statehood and most recently by the Territory of Alaska -- Ernest Gruening was shadow senator before Alaskan statehood -- a would-be state elects its congressional representatives as part of its pressure on Congress for statehood action. How Congress will react to Jackson and his shadow colleagues remains to be seen, but the move represents a significant escalation in the fight for DC statehood. Jackson has helped to turn DC statehood into a national issue, emphasizing the importance of a new status for the city to minorities, women, labor and other urban areas. In a sense, Jackson and running mate Florence Pendleton become the senators-elect for black America as well, since the Senate has no black members.

San Francisco backed a measure allowing **unmarried couples** to register their relationships with the city but without conferring new benefits. Seattle kept its law providing spousal benefits for unmarried companions of municipal employees.

Pro-choice advocates won a number of victories. Nevadans retained a liberal abortion law, and in Oregon a virtual ban on abortions was defeated as was a parental notification measure. Pro-choicers claimed credit for helping to defeat Governor Martinez in Florida -- considered by some the most prominent anti-abortion governor, and saving Idaho's Cecil Andrus, who vetoed a tough anti-abortion measure. The defeat of Virginia's DC-bashing congressmember Stan Paris, was also considered a victory for pro-choicers. But the perhaps the best news came from the ABC exit poll, which found the abortion issue coming in last on a list of "very important" election issues.

The Alaskan Green Party won official ballot status, which was a first for Greens around the country, thanks to getting just over three percent of the vote.

Other bright spots in the election included the reelection of Oregon's **Mark Hatfield** and Maine's new liberal congressmember, **Tom Andrews.**

Progressive losses

National populist leader **Jim Hightower** lost his bid for re-election as Texas Agriculture Commissioner in an upset engineered by the Farm Bureau and chemical industry. While his opponent, Rick Perry (who was recruited by agribusiness interests to run against Hightower) was running negative television commercials, Hightower could only get as far as a low level radio campaign. Some observers thought Hightower waited too long to raise money for the effort, with party leaders underestimating his vulnerability. In his previous two runs for the office, Hightower had won with about 60% of the vote. This time he got just under 49%.

California defeated **Big Green**, a far reaching environmental proposal, by 63-37 percent. Said Reid Wilson of the Sierra Club, "I think we are in a very unique and unusual period in this country. There is unease over whether we are going to have a shooting war. A lot of people are more focussed on the possibility of an economic downturn. With all that anxiety... people were in a 'just say no' mood." Wilson also said the complexity and scope of the measure bothered some people.

A proposal to require **increased recycling** was defeated 59-41 in Oregon. Voters there also rejected a **nuclear shutdown** measure that would have required the closing of the Trojan nuclear plant if it did not meet earthquake safety standards.

New York rejected a proposal to issue up to $1.9 billion in **environmental bonds** to finance projects from parkland acquisition to handling solid wastes. Said Mario Cuomo, who pulled only 53% himself against three little known contenders, "That no on the bond

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Close Races

Here are the vote percentages in close Senate and House races involving progressives. Those defeated shown in bold face type. Unless otherwise noted, incumbent progressives won easily. Figures are latest available at presstime:

Senate

Daniel Akaka[HI]	54%
Tom Harkin[IA]	54%
Paul Wellstone[MN]	52%
Harvey Gantt	**47%**

House

California	
Douglas Bosco	**42%**
George Brown	53%
Jim Bates	45%
Indiana	
James Jontz	53%
Kentucky	
Carl Perkins	51%
Massachusetts	
Chester Atkins	52%
Gerry Studds	52%
New Jersey	
Bernard Dwyer	52%
Pennsylvania	
Doug Walgren	**49%**
Wisconsin	
Robert Kastenmeier	**47%**

issue wasn't no to making the place cleaner and greener. It was people saying we think you don't know how to do it. It was people screaming at the government that we don't trust you anymore. Cuomo went on: "When people in the towns on Long Island come to Albany and say, 'The solid waste problem is killing us. We need help,' and we say, 'Sorry, but we don't have the bond issue,' people will have second thoughts... I guarantee you."

Washington state voters turned down an **omnibus environmental initiative** that would have increased protection of wetlands, restricted urban sprawl, and authorized the imposition of fees to pay for services required by new housing developments.

Washington DC backtracked on its long standard-setting commitment to **shelter for the homeless** by a rejecting a referendum that would have reaffirmed the right to shelter after the city council and mayor gutted the original initiative. Supporters were hurt by the opposition of all major politicians, strong opposition by white voters, and non-coverage followed by editorial opposition by the *Washington Post.* Although Washington has long had a large core of white liberals, rising housing costs and income levels are changing the nature of the white electorate.

Marijuana: A major loss in Alaska where voters approved a referendum outlawing possession of marijuana. For the past fifteen years, pot in small quantities has been legal there, but by a 55-45 margin, the voters rescinded the law. Pot advocates promise to test the decision in court. It was such a test that threw out Alaska's pre-decriminalization marijuana law. Look for an increase in hard drugs and drug violence in Alaska as a result of the move from the most liberal pot law in the nation to one of the most draconian.

The most impressive defeat of the election was **Harvey Gantt's** near victory over the odious Jesse Helms. One of the saddest was the loss of staunch progressive **Bob Kastenmeier** who has represented his Wisconsin district for 32 years.

Gagging workers

Peter Downs

Chris Grygiel came to the U.S. from Poland in 1988 seeking freedom. At first, he thought he had found it. Grygiel was jailed three times in Poland for his activities with Solidarnosc. He left Poland immediately after his third release and ended up settling in St. Louis, Mo., where he drove an airport taxicab. In July 1989, he led a short work stoppage of cab drivers seeking better pay. He and several other drivers were fired on the spot and blacklisted from the industry. He appealed to the county, state, and federal governments, but to no avail.

That experience shocked Grygiel. "In Poland," he says, "at least we kept our jobs. Everytime I got out of jail, my job was there waiting for me. We didn't have freedom, but in some ways we were more free, because we couldn't be fired for our political activities."

Grygiel's experience in America is not unusual. The Communications Workers of America estimates that fully one out of five workers voting for a union loses his or her job because of it, effectively denying millions of Americans the rights of freedom of assembly and speech on a daily basis.

Where workers have unions, employers have developed more sophisticated programs of control. One industry where these are especially well developed is the nuclear industry. During the 1970s and '80s, the nuclear industry was stung by revelations of dangerous procedures and unsafe conditions. The Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington was no exception. A recent report of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor of complaints of harassment by Ed Bricker reveals just how far one contractor. Rockwell International, was willing to go to silence reporting on safety problems. The Labor Department investigator, John Spear, concludes that management intervened in union affairs and incited employees to spy on and harass Bricker, while also disciplining him for his activities. In summary, Spear writes:

"The company felt sufficiently threatened by the public attention that in October 1986 the president issued a directive to all employees not to talk to the news media without company authorization. They had also appointed special managers and security investigators to investigate

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and track problem. When security officials learned in January 1987 that it may have been Bricker who was leaking information to the press, they launched an investigation of him and his activities, subtly recruiting fellow employees to report on him. At no time in the course of the security investigations did they learn of, or even suspect that, any classified or proprietary information was being released, only safety hazards, yet the investigations continued for a year until the manager in charge transferred to a different company in the course of the contract consolidation.

"It was in this context that Bricker was sent to a psychologist against his will, given blank performance evaluations, stripped of his union stewardship and shunned by fellow workers and management."

The managerial tactic of labeling a critic "mentally unstable" and sending him or her to a psychologist is not altogether new, though it is perhaps better known in the Soviet Union. Eastern Airlines, for example, grounded pilot Dan Gellert in the mid-1970s for mental instability and sent him to three psychologists after he advised that National Transportation Safety Board of a defect in the autopilot of the L-1011.

It may be becoming more common, however. In August 1989, the Government Accountability Project released information on four workers in the nuclear industry who were ordered to psychiatrists or psychologists against their will. One company defended its action by claiming the individual involved wasn't a whistleblower, but a "highly vocal union leader." He was ordered to a psychiatrist during contract negotiations. Bricker, then a union steward, first was ordered to see a psychologist after walking out of a grievance hearing which he characterized as "a kangaroo Court."

On August 10, 1990, Bricker and his wife filed a $30 million lawsuit against Rockwell and Westinghouse for the campaign of harassment and intimidation. Bricker realizes, however, that a victory in the suit means little without a change in the system for workers, because, though he believes "there are a lot of good and decent people" at places like Hanford, "they're not going to go through what Ed Bricker went through, so they don't speak up."

Gag orders, such as the one Rockwell issued in October 1986, seem to be a favorite tool of corporate managers. General Electric issued such as order to the employees of its Knolls Atomic Power Labs on September 15, 1988, after some employees went to Congress and the news media with allegations of safety and environmental hazards at the labs, including a radioactive parking lot. The Knolls order bars employees even from commenting on unclassified information or classified information that has been publicly disclosed. There are no exceptions, not even for communications to Congress, the Department of Energy's Inspector General, a court, or for discussions of information in the public domain, such as management statements "appearing in newspapers, magazines, and books, or that are made in speeches, on TV, at open meetings, or even in casual conversations." According to Tom Carpenter, an attorney for the Government Accountability Project which is aiding some workers disciplined at the site, "When management lies and the worker knows it is a lie, the worker cannot expose the lie." The Knolls order also tells employees that unauthorized comments can "Jeopardize Your Job; Result in a Security Violation with Possible Associated Penalties of: -Fines up to $100,000; -Up to Life Imprisonment."

The nuclear industry is not the only one trying to gag employees. Managers at both General Motors and McDonnell Douglas told employees not to speak to the press during the past year. An article in a GM company newsletter even advised automotive employees not to talk about their work socially when non-GM people are present.

Gagging employees is the first step in controlling public information about the company. Since not all information comes from employees, however, some companies have moved to find ways to gag citizens and the mass communications media.

One popular tool for suppressing public discussion of corporate plans is the libel suit. For example, in 1988, DECOM Medical Waste Systems Co. filed $1 million libel suits against Jacqueline Sommer and Linda Tanner, residents of small towns in rural Missouri. DECOM wanted to build a hazardous waste incinerator in the area where the women lived, and each had written a letter to the editors of newspapers opposing the project. Sommer's letter was published. Tanner's was not. Sommer had contacted an anti-toxics clearinghouse, Fight Against Toxic Emissions, for information on other DECOM incinerators. In her letter, she claimed that residents downwind from those incinerators experienced greater health problems, and that hospital wastes, including blood contaminated with AIDS, could be burned in the incinerator DECOM wanted to construct.

Newspapers and state legislators raised a hue and cry about that suit, and the company dropped it in 1989. The chilling affect of the suit on public discussion is apparent to Sommer, a schoolteacher, who states that she's not sure she would risk facing the emotional and financial strain of battling such legal charges again.

Thus, the irony of media reports on such cases as Bricker's and Sommer's is that even though the individuals may eventually win, others are discouraged from following their example because they don't want to experience the kind of harassment experienced by those who spoke out.

Media companies are themselves subject to harassment. In the spring of 1990, Neighbor to Neighbor was looking for outlets to air a "Boycott Folger's" announcement. The announcement features Ed Asner's voice urging viewers to boycott Folger's because the brand's manufacturer, Procter & Gamble, buys coffee beans from El Salvador, the money from which goes to support that country's civil war, while showing images of blood oozing from an overturned coffee mug.

Neighbor to Neighbor asked 30 stations to air the announcement. All but two refused. One of the two carried no Procter & Gamble advertising. The other, WHDH in Boston, did. It immediately suffered retaliation for broadcasting the Neighbor to Neighbor spot. Procter & Gamble pulled local ads for all of its products from the station, business worth nearly $1 million a year to WHDH. P & G also warned its ad agencies that it will pull commercials from any station broadcasting the Neighbor to Neighbor announcement. P & G is the largest packaged-goods advertiser in the United States. Its message reinforced what station managers already believed: don't criticize business and stay away from controversial topics (with the minor exception of election campaign commercials) or it will cost the station business. Actions such as P&G's don't have to happen often for media outlets to be self-censoring.

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Taken individually, none of the actions described above may seem like a threat to liberty. Taken together, however, they sketch the outlines of a system to suppress public discussion of the activities of businesses and limit our freedoms of expression and assembly. To Chris Grygiel, the cause of freedom demands a third way, one which is neither the dictatorship of a party nor the dictatorship of employers. Val Romay, a 27-year veteran of GM looking at the company efforts to control its workers puts it similarly. "I served two years at the Berlin Wall," he says, "we don't need that here. We don't need dictatorship in the plants."

Peter Downs' articles have appeared in The Review, The Progressive, Commonweal and elsewhere. He is an autoworker at GM's Wentzville Assembly Center.

Sneering at Jesse

Paul Rockwell

Even before Jesse Jackson landed in Baghdad, where he rescued 270 British, French and American hostages, Fred Barnes of *Newsweek* had questioned his patriotism. *Newsweek* called the trip a "busted mission," and aside from such sneers and passing digs, the major newsweeklies blacked out the entire Jackson-hostage story.

ABC's *Nightline* also trashed the trip. ABC News president Roone Arledge claimed, "Jackson's as much a journalist as you or I are ministers."

In fact, Jackson wrote a weekly syndicated newspaper column in Chicago from 1977 to 1983. His commentaries have been regular features of the National Black Radio Network for years. And Jackson's weekly column for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate is widely respected for its reasoned tone, its progressive outlook, its clarity and coherence. Further, the line between activist and journalist in television has been repeatedly crossed by rightwing performers such as the ubiquitous Pat Buchannan.

Before Jesse Jackson got involved in the liberation of prisoners and hostages abroad, such stories dominated media foreign news. Family pictures, interviews with relatives, close-ups of agonized faces, expressions of anger and hope inundated news weeklies and TV shows. The 57 hostages in Iran was the leading prime-time story for over a year in 1979. But in Iraq, the media has given perfunctory coverage, not only of Jackson's role, but of the hostages themselves. *Newsweek* described Jackson as having been "allowed to extract a few sick male hostages from Kuwait." Even the hostages that come home, if they come with Jackson, are not welcome anymore.

The Jackson rescue mission was actually full of the sort of stories of endurance, skill, solidarity and hope that network editors long to use on prime time. For example, the liberation of Faryel Allen of Gainesville, Fla., required head-to-head collision between Jackson and Iraqi authorities. Jackson got word that a woman, who had been hiding from the Iraqi police for three days on the third floor of the hotel, was ill and desperately wanted to go home. Jackson sent her a message that he would try to gain her release. When Iraqi police intercepted the message and arrested the woman, hotel managers kept insisting that Jackson would never change the minds of the authorities. Milton Viorst, the *New Yorker* journalist who traveled with the Jackson entourage, wrote that the crisis "showed Jackson at his best. . .He was tireless." Jackson's group held a meeting and reached a unanimous decision: to tell the authorities that the Americans refused to leave without Faryel Allen. Jackson argued with authorities for hours. He was polite but firm. When he finally came down the stairs with Allen at his side, wrote Viorst, "Many cheered, more than a few wiped tears from their eyes. . .One by one the released hostages emerged through the turnstile gate, joyous in their freedom. Everyone was elated -- the hostages, Jackson, reporters, onlookers. But back home, the media wrote it all off with, at best, a sneer.

Paul Rockwell is a writer in the San Francisco Bay area whose work has appeared in The Nation, Oakland Tribune, Bay Guardian and elsewhere.

FIELD NOTES

National Center for Economic Alternatives: *A Third Way.* A sourcebook on innovations in community-owned enterprise. Discusses community development corporations, employee stock ownership plans, cooperatives, and municipal environmental projects. $15 [1000 Conn Ave NW, DC 20036]

Institute for Local Self-Reliance: Has published *Beyond 40 Percent: Record-Setting Recycling and Composting Programs.* Case studies of 17 communities with the highest materials recovery levels in the country. The report is $50 for corporations, individuals and government and $25 for non-profit community groups. [2425 18th NW, DC 20009. 202-232-4108]

The Patriotic Majority: A new organization attempting to seize patriotic imagery for the left. Backers include Noam Chomsky, John Conyers, Ron Dellums, Ron Kovic, Eleanor Smeal and Gary Wills. [202 S. State #1420 Chicago Ill 60604]

New Democrats: The New Democrats have called for a national debate on our continued presence in the Persian Gulf. "We support US participation in an international force designed to enforce UN sanctions against Saddam Hussein's illegal aggression against Kuwait. But we need to avoid being drawn into a longer and even more costly conflict." [PO Box 360, Reading, MA 01867]

Coalition for Democratic Values: A new group formed by progressive Democrats --including 50 members of Congress -- to push a progressive agenda for the party. Headed by Senator Henry Metzenbaum and directed by longtime grassroots organizer Heather Booth, the group is making tax justice one of its first priorities. [1007 Ripley St., Silver Spring, MD 20910 301-589-6062]

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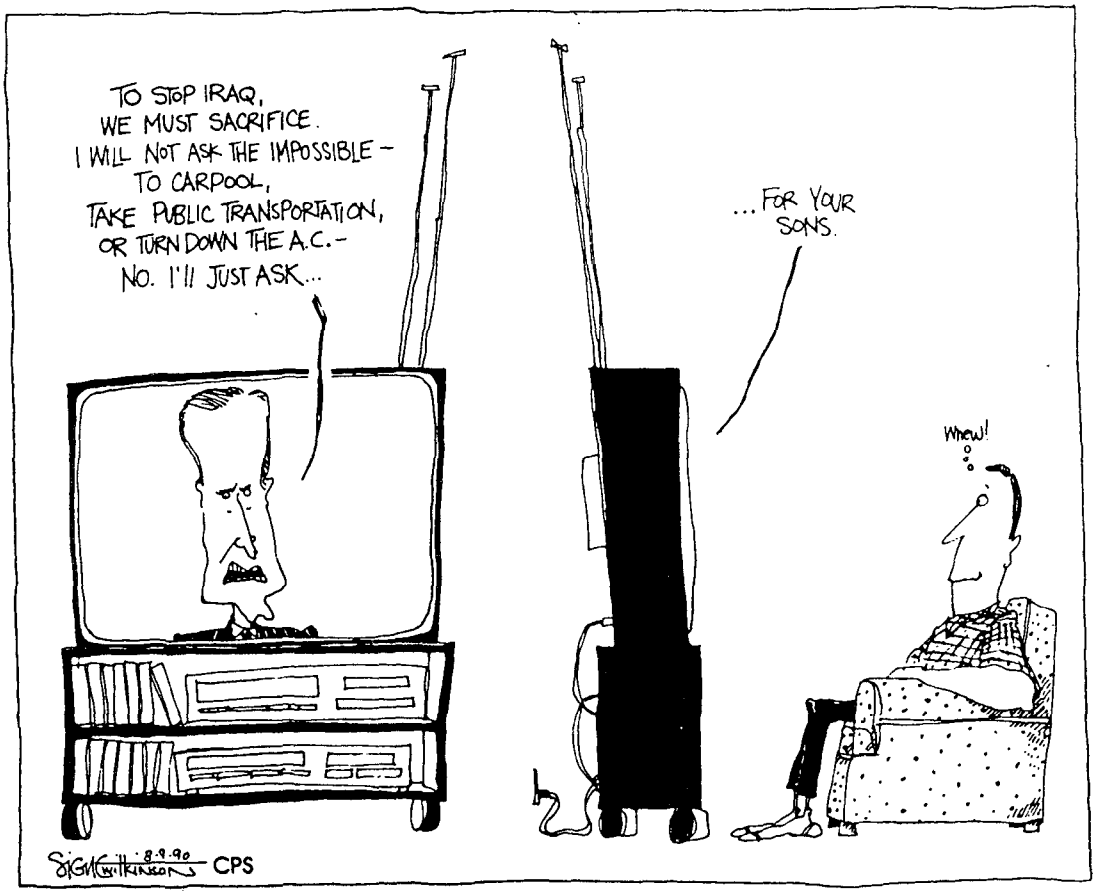

The Weather Report

The Petro-Crusades

According to Scott Denman of the Safe Energy Communication Council, if the Reagan administration hadn't rolled back mandatory gas mileage improvements in 1985, cars today would be getting on average 6 to 7 miles per gallon better than they are. That, incidentally, would be an oil savings equivalent to what we import daily from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq combined.

If we become involved in a full-scale Middle East war, you might want to keep in mind October 16 as the day it all might have happened differently. That was when State Secretary James Baker said that Saddam Hussein had, in the words of the *New York Times*, "indicated tentative interest in a compromise settlement of the Kuwait crisis but that Washington considered the terms unacceptable and continued to insist that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait before any talks begin. Mr. Baker said at a news conference that the vague compromise proposals being floated by Baghdad suggested it might be willing to pull out of Kuwait if it were allowed to retain 'Bubiyan Island, access to the gulf and things like that.'" In our October issue, Middle East anthropologist William O. Beeman wrote, "When Iraq responds -- and the chances are very good that they will -- we must treat them with dignity. . . They would probably be thrilled with some concessions on Kuwait's Bubiyan Island." The Bush administration, trapped in its decadent machismo, didn't get the message.

According to David Henderson, who served on President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, the threat of Iraqi takeover of Middle East oilfields is greatly exaggerated. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Henderson said: "The annual cost to the US economy of doing nothing in the Gulf would be less than half of 1 percent of the gross national product. The vaunted oil weapon is a dud."

As Saddam Hussein should have learned in the 80s, style is everything. Take Syria, for example. It managed to take over a country right in the midst of the Gulf crisis with no problems. The *Washington Post* ran a mealy-mouthed editorial in which it described the deposed General Michel Aoun as the "leader of a defiantly nationalistic Christian faction." Apparently, Bush and *Post* policy is to support defiant nationalists in Kuwait but not in Lebanon. Lebanese concerns for self-determination were dismissed by the *Post's* Nora Boustany in an article from Beirut as "nostalgia" for a "pre-1975 past of sectarian pluralism and democratic participation." In Kuwait, the past is to die for, in

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Role Models

General William Odom in *USA Today,* speaking of congressional war powers: "The new technical and military realities do not invalidate the spirit of the Constitution. They do make the old formalities obsolete for most situations."

John Andrews, the Republican candidate for governor in Colorado, served until recently as an officer of Spindrift, described by the *Washington Times,* as "a group that tried to prove scientifically the power of prayer to influence the growth of mung beans in yogurt."

David Souter got a free ride from most of the media during pre-confirmation days. One exception was Lars-Erik Nelson of the *New York Daily News* who stumbled across a New Hampshire Supreme Court case concerning two brothers (aged 79 and 76) who had shared a janitorial job at a youth center for 22 years. Their application for unemployment benefits was denied because of a state law requiring an applicant to be willing to work eight hours a day. The brothers, because of their age and health, could only work four. According to Nelson, Judge Souter, in upholding the ruling, did not deny that brothers "suffered from heart, back and eye ailments -- but he questioned whether they suffered so much that they could not work a full day." Said Souter: "It is neither common knowledge, nor do the plaintiffs claim, that a weak back, poor eyesight or angina necessarily prevent an individual who can work four hours a day from working eight."

Marion Barry, the convicted mayor of DC, was asked at a debate as he was running for city council whether he would serve even if he ended up in jail. He said he was taking it one day at a time but noted that he had "spirituality, whether people want to believe it or not. So God is a factor. But more important than that, I have some outstanding lawyers. . ."

Lebanon it's just nostalgia. And what Syria did wasn't an invasion, only an "attack," judging from the *Post* editorial. After all, you can't have two equivalents of Hitler invading at the same time. It gets too confusing.

Drug Busts

The director of Britain's chief anti-drug agency stunned an international conference this summer when he said that society should learn to live with illegal drugs in the same way it lives with alcohol and tobacco. Said David Turner: "We now have an increasing number of studies showing that controlled use of heroin and cocaine is possible, and in ways not economically, culturally or socially destructive. I believe our task is to begin to work on development of a cultural and social capacity to contain the use of drugs within our society." Total prohibition, added Turner, hinders development of a social context in which non-dysfunctional drug use can occur.

In Maryland, Attorney General J. Joseph Curran Jr. recently said that there should be a public discussion of decriminalization of drug use if current law enforcement and education efforts fail to halt drug violence: "Maybe there will come a time when citizens will say, 'Let's get rid of the profit motive and get rid of the drug dealers.' Heretofore, this has been unthinkable, but maybe someday we'll think about the unthinkable."

The Partnership for a Drug Free America, which incidentally gets part of its money from cigarette manufacturers, has been putting out some misleading statistics, according to a story in the *St. Petersburg Times.* For example, PDFA claims that drug use costs American business at least $60 billion a year. The figure is based on a 1983 federal study that claimed $60 billion was the cost to *society as a whole.* The portion related to business productivity was $24 billion, with most of that being lost wages by drug users themselves. PDFA also says that the average drug user first tries an illegal drug at 11.6 years, but that stat is actually the one for youthful cigarette use. The figure that doctors and nurses were 50% more likely to be addicted than the general population reflected the estimate of a Chicago nurse who says it was based on skimpy research and is outdated. Further, the claim that drug users are 3.6 times more likely to injure themselves on the job was based on an informal study of alcoholics, not users of illegal drugs.

A front page story in the *New York Times* suggests the ouster of Noriega was counterproductive in reducing Panamanian drug trafficking. According to the article, the ouster of Noriega has opened up new rural landing strips and coastal areas to smuggling. The sources say that transshipments of cocaine through the country are both more apparent and more abundant than before.

Not every local official kowtows to William Bennett when he does his anti-drug act on their turf. After hearing Bennett in Minnesota, State Senator Allan Spear, who chairs the legislature's judiciary committee, described the retiring P.T. Barnum of the drug wars as "a real jerk." If Bennett is looking for a good retirement speech he might get some ideas from that of DC Commissioner George Allen, who regaled FDR and other New Dealers at a farewell dinner, bragging that under his stewardship, both the death and destitution rate had increased.

An attempt to repeal Berkeley law directing police to make marijuana busts their lowest priority failed because of insufficient petition signatures.

Despite repeated assurances of the reliability of drug tests, the National Institute on Drug Abuse admitted in late October that there were "potential problems" in a widely used federal drug testing procedure. This is something of an understatement given that five out of seven positive identifications of drug use by one lab turned out to be wrong, confusing over-the-counter medications with methamphetamines.

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Although the media has assumed broad backing of the Bush-Bennett war on drugs in America's cities, a recent public opinion survey suggests that in Washington at least that is not the case. The city's criminal justice planning agency conducted a public opinion poll with these revealing results:

o Only 30% thought drug use should be handled through arrest and prosecution. 65% favored medical treatment.

o 30% favored some form of drug legalization

o About three-quarters of the respondents felt resources allocated for anti-drug activities should be used for drug treatment and job training centers instead of jails.

Eco-Notes

John Pike, an Oxford NC attorney, has devised a unique strategy for preventing the placing of a hazardous waste disposal complex in that state. Pike subdivided a 48-acre site he owned in the middle of the proposed location into 70,000 parcels and is selling them off. Since early June, Pike and volunteers have sold thousands of parcels. The idea is to force the state to have to deal with thousands of land owners, according to each one the procedural rights under condemnation and environmental laws.

While the federal government has failed to develop a sensible alternative energy policy, some states are making important strides in that direction. A recent report from Public Citizen notes that if all states were as good as the five best, energy use in this country would drop 35%. The five winners are New York, Arizona, Vermont, California and Colorado. The five worst are Texas, Wyoming, Alaska, Kansas and Louisiana.

The Peace and Justice Network in San Joaquin County, CA, calculates that when you factor in all the time spent on your car, a bike would be faster. Updating a methodology suggested by Ivan Illich, the group figured as follows:

Average Americans spend about $3820 annually on their cars and about 40 minutes a day travelling 20 miles. This does not include the cost of a garage or parking at home, local road taxes or health impacts. Let's estimate the full cost of owning a car at $5000 a year. At an average take-home wage of $8 an hour, this translates to 625 work hours plus 365 hours to use and service a car, totalling 990 hours per year or 2.7 hours a day. Based on this estimate, your car is really only moving at 7.3 miles per hour. The typical bike commuter can average 8-12 miles per hour.

A Media-General Associated Press poll suggests that Americans have turned green with a vengeance. Among the findings of this national survey:

- Nine in ten people living in communities without mandatory recycling would support such a regulation.
- Seven in ten support a statewide post to enforce environmental laws.
- Three in four said anti-pollutions laws were too weak.
- 61% favored restrictions on timbering old forests.
- 88% favored restrictions on product packaging.
- 84% favored a ban on foam plastic containers such as used in fast food shops.
- 71% favored a ban on disposable diapers.

According to a recent article in *Mother Jones*, each shuttle launch delivers 150,000 of ozone-busting chlorine directly to the stratosphere -- equivalent to more than 6 months' worth of the stuff pouring out of California's most polluting factory.

Old News

A sensational trial in Portland OR last spring ended in the acquittal of a man accused of lying when he said he had been a CIA operative present at meetings in Paris when Reagan-Bush campaign officials had bribed Iranian officials not to release 52 US hostages in order to guarantee Reagan's election. The case involved, according to defendant Richard Brenneke, William Casey, Donald Gregg, Richard Allen, and possibly Bush himself. Despite the obvious newsworthyness of the story, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* covered the trial, and restricted post-trial coverage

FIELD NOTES

Co-Op America: 1990 directory lists over 450 businesses and groups that care about consumers, workers, the environment and communities -- and show it in the way they do business or in the products they make. Free copy. [2100 M NW, #403, DC 20063 1-800-424-2667]

E. F. Schumacher Society: A fascinating and challenging pamphlet on the need for local currencies argues that not only has the centralized banking and money system outlived its usefulness, it has done so in a relatively short period of time. Since the Federal Reserve Act in 1913, savings have been funnelled out of rural areas to the large financial centers where small businesses must compete with multinational corporations for credit. The pamphlet says that with locally issued currency circulating in an area or bioregion, credit decisions would better reflect the needs of the region as a whole. $3. [Box 76 RD 3, Great Barrington MA 01230]

Earth Care Paper is a mail order company that sells recycled paper. Included in the line are computer paper, copy paper, envelopes, notecards, stationery, holiday cards and gift wrap. Catalog free [PO Box 14140, Madison WI 53714 or call 608-277-2900]

Dan Quayle Calendar from the folks at the Quayle Quarterly. A revealing Quayle photograph and Quayle quotes for every month. $7.95. The Quarterly itself tracks the man who said, "What a waste it is to lose one's mind, or not to have a mind as being very wasteful. How true that it is." Subscriptions $12.95 [PO Box 8593 Brewster Station, Bridgeport, CT 06605

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to short, ambiguous or misleading items on the back pages. The *Oregonian* gave it banner billing, emphasizing that the jury believed Brenneke's story. AP filed the story so it could have been easily picked up by the CIA-cozy *Times* or *Post* had they wanted it. [The *Oregonian* post-trial stories were on May 7. For more on the incident involved see the *Review,* November 1988]

When finally forced to come up with a figure, the Pentagonistas claimed only about 250 Panamanian civilians were killed during the US invasion. But a recent *Sixty Minutes* report lends credence to the view in a number of quarters that the total was in the thousands. How many we may never know because a significant number of civilian casualties were buried in mass graves in secret. One woman, who has been spearheading an effort to exhume the bodies, graphically depicted on *Sixty Minutes,* estimates the figure at closer to 4000. One secret US Army report put the total at 1000. And in another Pentagon memo, the Army was advised not to pay the traditional compensation to the families of the civilian dead because of the "potentially huge number" of claims.

The Mediacracy

From Colorado comes the report that Channel 4 paid local PBS Channel 20 $11,000 to air Four's election coverage. Provided in the deal were reporters from the commercial channel. That way Channel Four wouldn't have to pre-empt *Matlock, In the Heat of the Night and Law & Order.*

How often do you see a journalist from *Mother Jones* or the *Nation* in the Sunday TV public affairs ghetto? Not often, and the standard response is that these are "fringe" publications. In fact *Mother Jones* has a circulation of 190,000 compared to the *National Review's* 133,000. And the ever-favored right-of-center *New Republic* has a circulation of 98,000, only slightly above the *Nation's* 90,000.

Objectivity in Action: UPI headlined a story from Canada: Socialist Government in Ontario No Cause for Alarm. The lead: "Americans should not fear the socialist Ontario provincial government they may face after Thursday's election, experts say." Whew!

We've previously told you about FAIR's survey of the guests on the *McNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* --heavily balanced in favor of establishment figures, more so in fact than is the case with Ted Koppel, The Man Who Would Be Kissinger. The anchor duo's response to the criticism is even more remarkable. Lehrer dismissed policy critics as "moaners" and "whiners" and Robert McNeil announced that "there is no left in this country." Jim Lehrer lashed out at FAIR at a PBS convention in June, calling FAIR "a left-wing group with the phony name of FAIR" and the study "shoddy, unprofessional and unfair." The *Boston Globe's* Ed Siegel noted, "Lehrer never took issue with FAIR's statistics. It was a speech that had some of the more creative people in the room shaking their heads, rolling their eyes, and in at least one case, leaving the room."

Koppel's answer to similar criticism is also interesting: "Ours is a news program. . .When we are covering the news we try to go to the people involved in the news. . .What they have reflected in their *[FAIR's]* analysis of our guest list is that . . . we've been dealing with a rather conservative Reagan Administration. If we had a liberal administration in office, you would suddenly see an enormous disparity in the other direction." In other words, the Lodges speak only to Cabots, the Cabots speak only to God, and Ted Koppel speaks only to whomever is in power.

Meanwhile, a City University of New York study of prime time PBS programs finds that the amount of time allotted to American workers, including drama, documentary and talk shows, averaged only 20 minutes a month. PBS devoted nearly twice as much time to the business and social elite as to all other social strata combined.

According to the Center for Media and Public Affairs, during the first six months of the Bush administration, Millie, the Bush dog, got more mention in the press than either the secretaries of education, agriculture or veterans' affairs.

Road Signs

A nationwide poll has found that while 90% of the American people believe the government has no business telling them what to say, nearly 59% favor some form of censorship. More than one-quarter say the First Amendment shouldn't apply to the arts or the media.

The National Safe Workplace Institute says that between 47,000 and 96,000 Americans died from various types of occupational disease in 1987, much higher than the 3000-12,000 figure used by the National Safety Council, which counts mainly fatal accidents. Cancer, neurological disease, and lung disease were among the big factors.

America has one lawyer for every 360 people. Japan has one lawyer for every 10,000 people. In 1980, Washington, DC, had nearly 34,000 lawyers; now it has nearly 55,000 -- or just under one lawyer for every ten people.

Lines of Defense

Five years ago the Project on Government Procurement made waves with its report of the Pentagon paying $600 apiece for toilet seats and so forth. Well, inflation hits waste as much as anything else so we shouldn't be surprised at the news that the military is now paying $1800 for a toilet seat and $1000 for a pair of pliers. In 1988 the Air Force paid $120.48 apiece for 207 paper-cup dispensers. Then there's the case of the mechanical pullers, gizmos used to yank a howitzer hinge pin. The Pentagon paid $412.90 each for the devices this year, while 16 months earlier it bought the same items

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for $185 apiece. Even college tuition doesn't go up that fast.

This is not just another cute story on weapons procurement. As Pentagon whistleblower Ernie Fitzgerald points out, the real import of parts scandals is the degree to which they reflect the overpricing of the whole weapons system. Fitzgerald is the creator of Fitzgerald's First Law of Weapons Acquisition. There are only two phases in the process:

- 1. It is too early to tell.
- 2. It is too late to stop.

The Docket

The New Jersey Supreme Court has ruled that garbage left on the curb is private and can not be searched without a warrant. Said the NJ court: "A free and civilized society should comport itself with more decency" than to permit "the police to pick and poke their way through garbage bags to peruses without cause the vestiges of a person's most private affairs."

Classified Information

One of the great uncovered stories of the Bush administration has been the degree to which it has gagged government workers and is trying to subject them to security restraints even beyond those of the McCarthy era. Over four million people in government and defense industries have signed gag oaths (despite Congress refusing to authorize money for the project) and most of the media has acted like it never happened. George Bush is reportedly on the cusp of issuing a new executive order would put a further clamp on those working for the government or under contract to it. It is said to be only a modest revision of an order under which, in its earlier draft form, workers losing a security clearance could be fired at will. They would have lost the right to an administrative hearing, to confront their accusers or even to receive a statement of reasons purporting to explain the decision. Under current regulations workers are already required to ask their bosses the status of information and whether the proposed recipient "needs to know" it even if the material is not marked classified. The draft order sets up stringent requirements to make sure this happens.

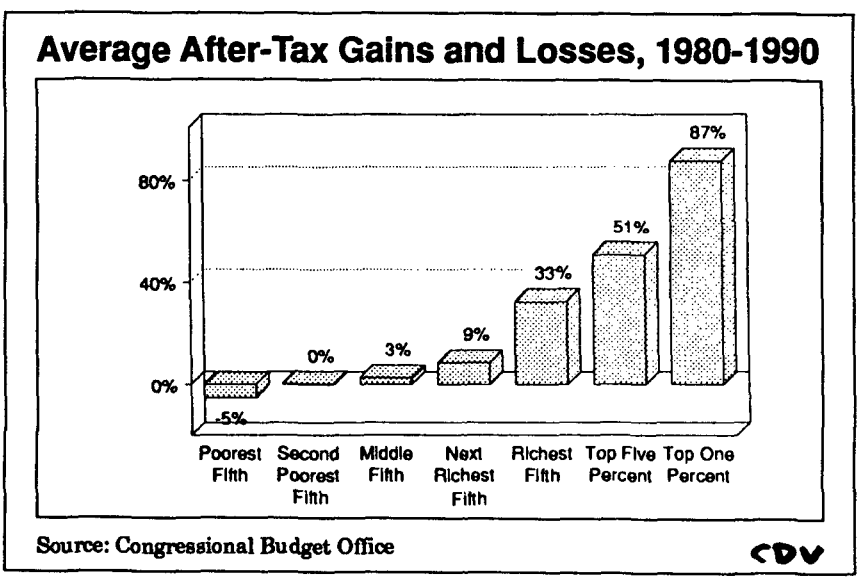
This security mumbo-jumbo is not to protect us against the Russians or Saddam Hussein, but it will certainly protect us from having to hear from whistleblower tales such as these revealed before the "security" clamp-down:

- a half-million pounds of uranium emissions
- an abandoned nuclear facility being used as a food warehouse although the building was still hot.
- the release of some four million pounds of carbon tetrachloride
- the dumping of 10,000 gallons of liquid radioactive waste into a river.
- fraud involving use of employee work time and theft of government equipment to produce products for private black markets, including the manufacture of gold and silver plated jewelry, wine presses, lavish memorial plaques, a $30,000 still, a $20,000 grandfather clock, and a $15,000 hardwood staircase smuggled out by employees in pieces.

Bush's McCarthyesque security plans are, in reality, not only an affront to democracy but an open invitation to government waste and fraud.

Just Politics

More than a 1000 progressives and leftists showed up in late October in Chicago for a conference which was only expected to attract a small group of college intellectuals. The Midwest Radical Scholars and Activists Conference, said one organizer, Lauren Langman of Loyola University, "just mushroomed."



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The Republican Presidential Task Force got zapped by a recent *Consumer Reports* for a fundraising gimmick in which direct mail recipients were sent a check for $25. If they signed and cashed it, said *CR,* they were authorizing the task force to "electronically withdraw $12.50 from your bank account each and every month, for the rest of your earthly days --or at least until you contact the Task Force or your bank to cancel the arrangement. Incidentally, you can't cancel for at least two months. That's to make sure the task force gets back its $25 investment." Which shows that Democrats aren't the only people who think Republican voters are pretty dumb.

Those seeking a metaphor for George Bush's approach to fiscal matters could do worse than examine his recent return to Washington from Camp David during the midst of October's government shutdown. Bush, an aide explained, made the trip by car in order to save the cost of the presidential helicopter: "It's a lot less expensive to go by motorcade." The only problem is, according to several news accounts, the helicopters made the trip anyway, standing by in case the president had to get some place in a hurry. Meanwhile, as this little scene was taking place, Barbara Bush was winging to Kennebunkport in Air Force 1 to close down the house for the season.

Also meanwhile, trash piled up on the Mall and at other federal sites around the capital, and one unhappy informant reports that outdoor toilets on the Mall were likewise considered non-essential. On the other hand, essential federal functions during the shut-down included launching the shuttle and removing a bunch of perfectly good trees from in front of the FBI Building for a "beautification project."

Furthermore

Says Lewis Grossberger in *7 Days:* "We have a president who won't eat his vegetables, a vice-president who plays with dolls, and a former president who calls his wife Mommy -- and we're the world's greatest power. Imagine how we'll do when we have grown-ups in office."

Only ?? More Shopping Days 'Til War!

In our story on S&Ls a few months back, we mentioned that the issue was not on the agenda of The Other Economic Summit. This was true at the time written, but ultimately wrong. A workshop on S&Ls was put together, as we have been informed by several persons who were present at the lively and well-attended session. Sorry to step on your TOES.

Most exciting organizing news of the month is the creation the Coalition for Democratic Values, the brainchild of longtime organizer Heather Booth. Some 55 members of Congress, headed by Howard Metzenbaum, have signed up with this alternative to the Robb barons at the Democratic Abandonship Council. CDV can be reached at 301-389-6062.

A new book on college sports, *Sports Inc,* reports that the big revenue producing college sports -- football and men's basketball -- do not earn enough to support other athletic programs. Further, most athletic programs operate in the red, and steal money from classroom and other student activities. Athletes recruited to play at NCAA Division I-A schools in 1988 were four times more likely to be admitted as "exceptions" to normal campus admissions standards than other students, according to a NCAA study released this fall. Says *Sports Inc.* author Murray Sperber, "Money that could go to better qualified students ends up going to jocks."

Berkeley has announced that beginning next year its affirmative action program will extend to students from low income families. While more than 60% of the students admitted to Berkeley come from racial or ethnic minorities, most also came from relatively well-to-do homes. White students have a median family income almost double that of black and latino students, but even blacks and latinos surpass the national medium.

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